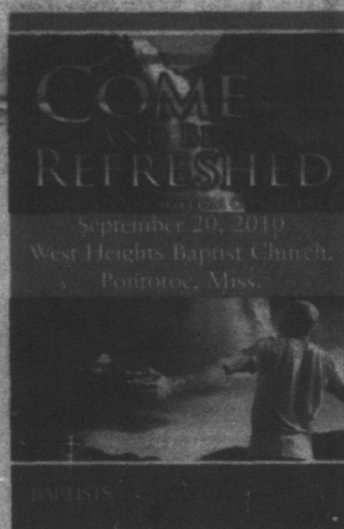


THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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ALMOST FINISHED — A housing unit nears completion at the new India Nunnery campus of the Baptist Children's Village in Star. Estimated date of completion for the Star campus is December of this year. (Special photo courtesy of the Baptist Children's Village)

BCV's India Nunnery campus to move

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

The India Nunnery campus of the Baptist Children's Village (BCV) on Flag Chapel Road in Jackson will be moving to a new facility under construction in Star after the Methodist Children's Home acquired the Flag Chapel Road property for \$1.5 million in mid-August.

"The new India Nunnery campus will house the extended care facilities for central Mississippi that were previously located at the original India Nunnery campus in Jackson," said Rory Lee, BCV executive director. "The administrative offices have been relocated to Ridgeland. The clinical services department will move to the same location in December."

When completed in December, the new India Nunnery campus in Star will join BCV facilities in Coldwater, Water Valley, Louisville, Brookhaven, Wiggins, Columbia, and Waynesboro. In addition, five acres of land near New Albany have been donated for a BCV facility. Future plans for a Delta campus will complete the statewide network.

The network of BCV facilities is designed to allow children to live within 50 miles of their families — now a requirement by the Mississippi Department of Human Services for children in the state's custody who are under BCV care.

"The smaller, more homelike settings will give increased accessibility to families and will allow us to more effectively minister to children and their families who need us," Lee said. "Small campuses are healthier for our children, create better opportunities to help reunify families and get the children back home, and allow more host churches to assimilate the children into church activities."

The average stay for a child in a BCV facility is about 24 months, Lee said.

The Methodist Children's Home will utilize the Flag Chapel Road campus for therapeutic care of teenagers, transitional living, and administrative services.



CONSTRUCTION VOLUNTEERS — A number of Mississippi Baptist and out-of-state Baptist churches and groups have volunteered to assist in the construction of the Baptist Children's Village's new India Nunnery campus in Star. The original India Nunnery campus, located on Flag Chapel Road in Jackson, has been acquired by the Methodist Children's Home and will continue to be used as a child care facility. (Special photo courtesy of the Baptist Children's Village)

Lee sees the acquisition as a win-win for both parties. "We benefit by having our children within 50 miles of their homes, while the Methodist Children's Home benefits by centralizing their ministry. Standards for such therapeutic care differ somewhat from those for residential child care services offered by BCV. This move allows both ministries to more effectively accomplish their specific roles in child care for hurting children," Lee said.

"This allows for the continuation of child care at the location used by BCV since 1964, and meanwhile frees BCV to go forward with statewide expansion," he added.

The Baptist Children's Village began as the Baptist Orphanage in 1897 in a house on Capital Street in Jackson, near the present-day location of Calvary Church. A house on North Congress Street was later acquired for expansion.

The orphanage moved to the campus of Millsaps College in Jackson during a yellow fever epidemic and eventually acquired property a short distance away at the intersection of Woodrow Wilson

Avenue and U.S. Highway 49, commonly known as Five Points. That property was sold in the mid-1960s to developers who built Jackson Mall, the state's first indoor retail mall.

The original India Nunnery campus on Flag Chapel Road was occupied in 1964.

"Over the last year, 241 children were served by BCV. Over the past six years, 185 children have made professions of faith," Lee said.

The Baptist Children's Village current budget is \$4,564,800. BCV receives 54% of its operating budget from Mississippi Baptist churches — 14% through the Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP), and 40% through Mississippi Baptist churches that give over and above their CP gifts. Individuals donate 42% of the budget, and four percent comes through investments.

"We are grateful for the continued support of this ministry," Lee said.

For more information about BCV, contact Celeste Cade at P.O. Box 27, Clinton, MS 39060. Telephone: (601) 922-2242. E-mail: ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com.

Koran plan irks So. Baptist ethics leader

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A Florida pastor's aborted plan to hold a large-scale burning of the Quran is "appalling" and does not represent the teachings of Christ, Southern Baptist ethicist Richard Land says.

The president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville made the comments in reference to a Florida pastor's plans, now cancelled, to hold "International Burn a Koran Day" on Sept. 11, the ninth anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks.

The pastor, Terry Jones, leads Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville, Fla., a nondenominational church that reportedly runs approximately 30-50 people each Sunday.

Jones said the event — which has garnered worldwide attention and already led to at least one large overseas protest — is an "act of warning radical Islam."

"The behavior of this church is not Christian," Land said during an online chat on The Washington Post's website. "I cannot imagine Christ burning any religious texts. This behavior is unfortunately one of the prices we pay for living in a free society with freedom of speech

and freedom of expression, even when it is odious and reprehensible. I believe it is incumbent upon Christians across the country to denounce this action by this local church and its pastor to make it as clear as possible that they do not speak for any sizable portion of the Christian faith community in any way, shape or form."

Land said the church's planned actions are "appalling, disgusting, and brainless" and that they "besmirch the reputation of our Savior, and that makes it blasphemy."

The planned Quran burning has sparked a worldwide controversy, and hundreds of Muslims gathered in Kabul, Afghanistan, Sept. 6 to burn a cardboard image of Jones in effigy while chanting, "Long live Islam" and "Death to America," according to the Associated Press.

Although most Americans may ignore the pastor, the rest of the world won't, warned Gen. David Petraus, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan. "It could endanger troops and it could endanger the overall effort in Afghanistan," he said.

Land agreed, saying there are elements within Islam



Land

which will react violently. "This would feed a cycle of violence in which acts by Muslim extremists would become self-fulfilling prophecies," he said.

Open Doors USA President Carl Moeller also condemned the planned event, saying it "violates the command of Jesus to love our neighbor" and "would likely cause Christians worldwide to be more vilified and persecuted." Open Doors supports the persecuted church worldwide.

"The burning of Qurans will only confirm what many Muslims believe — that Christians hate Muslims," Moeller said in a statement. "That is exactly the opposite message we as Christians want to send."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called the church's plan a "disrespectful, disgraceful act," and Attorney General Eric Holder called it "idiotic and dangerous."

Land, though, said the government should stay out of the way. "The only thing more dangerous than what this pastor is

doing would be to allow the government to interfere," he said. "This would set a terrible precedent and would diminish all our First Amendment rights. The best way to combat this is to exercise our free speech right to condemn what he is doing in the simplest way and most direct terms."

Jones and his church are not strangers to controversy. He has written a book, *Islam is of the Devil*, a phrase that is written on a series of signs on church property for passersby to see. The church's website also lists 15 reasons to burn a Koran.

Jones appeared on CBS' *The Early Show* Sept. 8 and agreed that Jesus said to "love your enemies."

"I believe that this approach is not the normal approach," Jones said, "but I believe that this approach is at this particular time in history very necessary. We also see times in the Bible where Jesus also got very upset. Jesus went into the temple and threw all the money changers out."

Looking back

10 years ago

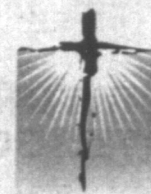
On the one-year anniversary of the Wedgewood Church shootings in Fort Worth, Tex., many Christians remain troubled why the tragedy is not classified as a hate crime and why it has not received any more attention from the national media.

20 years ago

At team of Mississippi Baptist women depart for Peru, where they will lead workshops for women in Lima, Pucallpa, Chiclayo, Trujillo, Cajamarca, and Arequipa. The Mississippians are Bobbie Foster, Prentiss, and Vickie Heath, Ashley McCaleb, and Janey Murray, all of Jackson.

50 years ago

Paul N. Nunnery, Hollandale attorney, is elected as the new superintendent of the Mississippi Baptist Orphanage, according to Ralph Hester, Jackson, chairman of the orphanage's Board of Trustees.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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No. 35



YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Ruling blocked

WASHINGTON (BP) — A federal appeals court on Sept. 9 suspended a judge's ruling that had blocked federal funding of embryonic stem cell research, meaning that such research again can take place at least temporarily. In a one-page order, the United States D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals temporarily stayed federal judge Royce Lamberth's Aug. 23 ruling and ordered the two parties to submit their briefs within days as to whether the stay should be extended. The three-judge panel — all appointed by Republican presidents — said the "purpose of this administrative stay is to give the court sufficient opportunity to consider the merits of the emergency motion for stay" and "should not be construed in any way as a ruling on the merits of that motion." On Aug. 23 Lamberth issued a temporary injunction blocking federal funding of embryonic stem cell research, ruling it violated the text of what is known as the Dicker-Wicker Amendment, which bars research "in which a human embryo or embryos are destroyed, discarded, or knowingly subjected to risk of injury or death." Lamberth has yet to issue a final ruling in the case, although his injunction said the pro-life coalition that filed the suit has a "strong likelihood" of winning. Attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund, which is involved in the suit and is part of a legal team representing the pro-life coalition, responded to the latest news by saying Lamberth's ruling was right. "The American people should not be forced to pay for even one more day of experiments that destroy human life, have produced no real-world treatments, and violate an existing federal law," ADF attorney Steven H. Aden said in a statement. "The district court's decision simply enforced that law, which prevents Americans from paying another penny for needless research on human embryos made irrelevant by adult stem cell and other research. In economic times like we are in now, it doesn't make sense for the federal government to use precious taxpayer dollars for this illegal and unethical purpose." Lamberth's injunction did not impact federal funding of adult stem research or induced pluripotent stem cell research (IPS), each of which has shown more promise than embryonic research. Neither involves embryos. Adult stem cell treatment has led to treatments for 73 diseases and ailments, according to the Coalition of Americans for Research Ethics. IPS research has yet to lead to any treatments, but scientists on both sides of the ethical debate say it is promising.



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

EDITOR
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

LAYOUT/DESIGN
Benjamin Ivey
bivey@mbcb.org

ADVERTISING
Emily Jones
ejones@mbcb.org

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Brenda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

EDITOR EMERITUS
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:

Archie Herrin, Columbia
Chris Webb, Jackson
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John Price, Charleston
Dwayne Parker, Flora
Paul Sims, Pontotoc

Postmaster:

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BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330

E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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Confused? Join the club

There was a Koran burning on September 11, just not at the now-infamous Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville, Fl. Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kn., previously best known for picketing military funerals and other solemn gatherings with offensive placards condemn-

ing America and homosexuals, took up the task after the Florida church's pastor backed down.

Didn't know about Westboro's Koran burning? That's not surprising. Virtually no one in the mainstream news media reported it, even though the country had been treated to weeks of non-stop coverage of the Dove World Outreach Center's aborted plans for International Burn a Koran Day.

For readers who might have been in a deep cave or under 100 feet of ice on Antarctica for the last couple of weeks, here's a short version of what transpired.

Pastor Terry Jones announced that his 50-member, unaffiliated church, Dove World Outreach Center, would host a special observance on September 11 to burn the Islamic world's holy book, the Koran, to spotlight Islam as a "religion of the devil" and the Koran as an "evil book."

After a swarm of unflattering news media reports, Jones backed down and didn't burn any Korans.

That's when Westboro Baptist Church (not a Southern Baptist church) decided to do what Jones ultimately didn't have the nerve to do. Westboro members, who consist mainly of relatives of pastor Fred Phelps, prepared one copy of the Koran, placed an American flag over it, and burned both on September 11.

"NO SCRIPTURE WAS
HARMED IN THE PREPARATION
OF THIS SERMON."



This drama is so full of irony, it's hard to know where to start commenting.

First, we were treated once again to a national news media out of control in terms of context and balance. Jones' church is a small, nondenominational group with a murky theology in a rather obscure setting, yet the news media painted him as representative of the greater Christian world. That's typical.

For years now, we have been told over and over by the news media that airplane hijackings that kill 3,000 people and human

underwear bombs are the works of depraved individuals and not indicative of Islam as a whole. Then, when a pathetically confused pastor of a nondescript church proposes an act much less violent than mass murder, we are led to believe that he speaks for all of modern Christianity.

Additionally, if this was such an important, earth-shaking story, why wasn't the Westboro Koran burning covered by the news media with the same ferocity? An event that didn't happen is international news, but an identical event that did happen is not — a real mystery to many of us, the great unwashed citizenry, out here in flyover country.

Secondly, the mad rush by the country's political and religious leaders to condemn and pressure an American attempting to exercise his First Amendment right to free speech was, to say the least, a disgrace. Many people were upset and uncomfortable with Jones' plans, but he had a constitutional right to do so.

Was it culturally sensitive? Was it appropriate and considerate of other people? Those are legitimate, debatable issues, but Jones' right to burn the Koran, or the Bible, or Gone with the Wind, is unquestionable under our Constitution. The

First Amendment may make us queasy at times, but it's the law of the land.

Lastly and most tragically, this episode has served to distract us from our main mission, which is to win Mississippi and the world to Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20). Anything else is, indeed, a distraction. We know that Satan is a master of confusion, and we must not allow this most potent weapon to be used against us.

Stay focused. Stay on mission. Accomplish the mission before Jesus comes again — and He is coming.

Historical Commission seeking significant anniversaries

CLINTON, Ms. (Special) — The Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission (MBHC) in Clinton has announced that a total of 52 churches, representing 6,700 years of Kingdom work, will reach significant milestones in 2011 and are urged to celebrate those anniversaries, according to MBHC Executive Secretary Edward L. McMillan.

Each church that informs MBHC of their significant anniversary celebration will receive a framed certificate and letter of commendation. Significant anniversaries is defined by the commission as 200 years, 175 years, 150 years, 125 years, and 100 years.

The commission requests that any church celebrating a significant anniversary that is

not included in the list below should contact MBHC at P.O. Box 4024, Clinton, MS 39058. Telephone: (601) 925-3434. E-mail: mbhc@mc.edu.

200 Years (Organized 1811)

Zion Hill (Mississippi)

175 years (Organized 1836)

Antioch (Rankin)
Bethany (Calhoun)
Bethlehem (Tishomingo)
Clarke Venable (Newton)
Clear Creek (Lafayette)
DeKalb (Kemper)
Double Springs (G. Triangle)
FBC, Burnsville (Tishomingo)
FBC, Ripley (Benton-Tippah)
Turnpike (Pontotoc)

150 years (Organized 1861)

FBC, Crystal Springs
(Copiah)
Homewood (Scott)
Salem (Kemper)
Union (Scott)
Wesson (Copiah)

125 years (Organized 1886)

Antioch (Rankin)
Bethel (Mississippi)
Como (Panola)
Crane Creek (Pearl River)
Enon (Jasper)
FBC, Belzoni (Humphreys)
FBC, Lumberton (Lamar)
McCool (Attala)
New Haven (Choctaw)
New Hope (Webster)
Oral (Lamar)
Sarepta (Calhoun)
Seminary (Cov.-Jeff Davis)
Scooba (Kemper)

Shady Grove (George)
Standing Pine (Leake)

100 years (Organized 1911)

Bethel (Mid-Delta)
Blaine (Mid-Delta)
Bentley (Calhoun)
Coat (Simpson)
Courtland (Panola)
FBC, Clara (Wayne)
Foxworth (Marion)
Knox (Walthall)
Kokomo (Marion)
Lakeshore (Gulf Coast)
Mesa (Walthall)
New Harmony (Neshoba)
New Liberty (Tishomingo)
Northrup Chapel (Clarke)
Oak Grove (Cov.-Jeff Davis)
Oak Hill (Pearl River)
Parker (Calhoun)
Sardis (Neshoba)
Ted (Smith)
West Shady Grove (Wayne)

Annual Black Church Week packs a lot into single day

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) — Few conferences begin as early as Black Church Week. The early praise service began at 6:15 a.m., before breakfast or even coffee.

Few go as late, either. Evening preaching ended about 9:30 p.m., with ice cream closing out the day at the Nibble Nook at the LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina.

In between were preaching, Bible study, and training, with plenty of fellowship during meals around the tables.

"We've had a great week on the mountain, haven't we?" T. Vaughn Walker, senior pastor of First Gethsemane Church in Louisville, Ky., told the 1,000-plus participants at the Black Church Leadership and Family Conference sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The applause and amens gave affirmation to his question. Walker, who also is professor of Christian ministries and black church studies at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., was each morning's Bible exposition leader.

Sensitive subject

Walker's topic one morning, *What We Don't Like to Talk About*, drawn from the Book of 2 Samuel, addressed sexual abuse.

"As a 30-year pastor, I find one of the most disturbing parts of my ministry is hearing from members of my congrega-

tion who have been sexually abused," Walker said, nevertheless calling on churches to address the issue that is so prevalent in today's society.

Sexual abuse is not new and is addressed in the Bible too, Walker said, in stories such as the rape of David's daughter Tamar by her half-brother Amnon.

Young men hear the message that sexual conquest is one of the marks of being a man, Walker recounted, while young women see other women marginalized as objects of lust because of their physical beauty and suggestive attire.

"Sexual abuse can affect every relationship in a victim's life," Walker said. "Victims will find it hard to trust anyone. If a family member inflicted the abuse, there will be issues with shame, self-loathing, and powerlessness, and they will always wonder why mama or daddy didn't try to stop it. Worst of all, many victims deal with guilt, thinking they must have done something to deserve it."

"We as a church must reach out to victims of sexual abuse with kindness and compassion," the pastor said. "We need to bring them in, not kick them out. We need to wrap our arms around them instead of talking about them."

Perpetrators need healing as well as the victims, Walker reminded. "They need to be shown compassion, and they need to recognize and confess their sin," he said. "Many of these perpetrators were abuse victims themselves and just were never taught better."



LIFTED HIGH — Participating in the nightly choir for the Black Church Leadership and Family Conference at the LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center were (from left) Pauline Hart and Sandra Mitchell, both of Fayetteville, N.C., and Wanda Barnes of Wilson, N.C. (BP photo)

Multifaceted conference

Throughout Black Church Week, a variety of options were available, focusing on such themes as discipleship, outreach, strategic planning, evangelism, marriage and family enrichment, and student and collegiate ministry.

In a session on choosing Sunday School curriculum, Christina Zimmerman, from LifeWay's leadership and adult publishing area, exhorted, "Think about the responsibility and charge you have been given as Sunday School leaders. You are there to help people learn how to study the Bible. Once they begin to know how to study the Bible, their lives will be transformed."

Mark Croston, senior pastor of East End Church in Suffolk, Va., taught *Truth About Grace*, LifeWay's January Bible Study for 2011 based on the Book of Galatians exploring the truth that salvation is by God's grace not human works.

"We are saved and kept by grace," Croston said. "When you really grab hold of your need for grace, then you become more willing to extend grace to others. One reason I know so much about grace is that I know how messed up I've been! I'm saved and continue to be saved not because I'm so good but because God will not let me go. I am bound to Him. I am saved and secured by grace."

Maina Mwaura, youth pastor at the Atlanta-area Greenforest Community Church in Decatur, Ga., spoke to youth leaders on

handling the emotional needs of students. "God is teaching me that Christianity is messy!" he said. "Students [who] come in to talk with me can have some messed up stuff going on, and these are church kids!"

Mwaura urged adults who work with youth to have a strong and healthy spiritual life with God, including daily devotions and Bible study. "You have to be prayed up and ready when you walk into a room with a student," he said. "Even if it starts with chaos, every counseling session needs to end with you giving the student steps to come next."

Mwaura urged the leaders to be alert to students who continually "request prayer" for others, as that sometimes is a ruse. "Watch out," he said. "Don't let prayer requests be a cover-up for gossip. The best way to handle that is just to come right out and say, 'Hey, this sounds more like gossip to me.'"

Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans brought a "big busload of people" to the Black Church Week's July 19-23 sessions, said church member Ethel Palmer. "Our church comes every year for training. The conference leaders have been anointed. I have been so blessed..."

"I do not want to go home [spiritually] the same way that I came," Palmer said. "I feel like I have learned so much. God has touched my heart and I have to go back and share it and use it."

Next year's Black Church Leadership and Family Week will be July 18-22 at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center.



TO THE LORD — At the request of pastor James Gailliard, attendees at Black Church Week join hands in prayer during an evening worship service at the LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina. (BP photo)

BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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CKWXANZ; CE B ACQN
SWQNM TWH, XACX TN
CSEW SWQN WKN
CKWXANZ.

DWAK XABZXNNK:
XABZXT-OWHZ

Clue: S = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Nine: Twenty-three

GETTING UP AND GOING TO CHURCH IS NO EASY TASK

Going to church and experiencing the worship, the fellowship, the encouragement, the newness, and the freshness of a special encounter with God is a glorious thing. I enjoy going to church, and it has been a part of my life even before I can remember. For me, the experience began when I was wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a cradle at church. Through the years I have encouraged people to go to church and even preached about the challenges that often-times need to be overcome in order to go to church. I have been sympathetic to families trying to get ready and load up the family car to head off to worship, but to be honest I generally have not experienced the difficulties faced in getting ready to go.

As a kid, I was the difficulty. In recent years since I am at a different location every Sunday, I still get ready and head out before any stirring goes on at the house. Not long ago God provided a wakeup call to remind me of what folks go through in order to get to church. We were on vacation for a few days and Sunday arrived. When I say "we," I'm not talking about just my wife Shirley and me. I'm talking about children, spouses, and grandchildren. Sunday morning we were getting up, getting ready, and visiting a church near where we were staying.

It was a gorgeous Sunday, which did not help with the process. Clouds, a little drizzle, or some rain would have helped, but no it was a beautiful, sparkling, clear, sunshiny day, and all of the grandkids were ready to run and play on the outside. The parents were trying to be somewhat lenient because it was different and a vacation experience, but in these conditions you give a kid an inch and he is going to take a full mile. Reasoning means nothing, saying you can play for a little while, and then we have to hurry and get ready, was wasted



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

verbiage. Each one of the children had their own agenda and a clear set of issues that were not particularly fitting into the going to church experience.

I wanted to be helpful but as a good grandparent I tried to stay quiet and keep my distance. Of course, there were just the normal Sunday morning issue of, "I want to watch that."

"No, turn the TV off."

"I want to watch something else."

"Turn the TV off."

"Why can't we watch TV?"

"Because!"

"Well, I want to watch another program."

"Well, turn the TV off!"

Then, of course, there was breakfast. What was available for breakfast was not exactly what each child wanted to eat. Cereal, doughnuts, toast, milk, orange juice, a milkshake left over from the night before, or, fine, have some coffee. Nothing seemed to fit perfectly. The kids were not being bad; they were just being kids.

I thought I had better get myself ready to go to church so I rushed in and started getting dressed. Right off the bat I ran into a problem. I could not find my contact lenses. I had taken them out the night before and put them in their container. I looked, scurried around, and could not find them. Finally, I asked Shirley if she had any idea where my contact lenses were. She responded, "I don't know. I have mine and I put them on here in the bedroom." I asked, "Where did you get them?" She pointed right where I had left mine and I

said, "I think you got mine and not yours." Sure enough, she was the one who misplaced her contact lenses and now she was walking around wondering what was wrong with her eyes. It was the blind leading the blind — or the blind leading the blurred. She took my contact lenses out, found hers, put them in, and I got mine put in. We were ready to go to church.

Finally, everybody was just about ready. Of course, you never get fully ready. You get as close to ready as you can and you herd everybody into the car. There is actually a small window of opportunity when everybody is almost ready to get them in the car and take off for church before the kids start getting messed up again. We captured the moment and got in the vehicle.

There is something triumphant about that moment. It is like mission accomplished. Now at least we have it all together and we are in the car. Surely, God is honored by that.

This day, it was not as peaceful as it ought to have been because we weren't sure where the church was. We knew what time it started, but we did not know where it was. Since I had a good idea, I wasn't particularly perturbed. I cranked the car and took off in the general direction of where I thought the church should be. Sure enough, it was

not far from where I thought it would be. We got there just as the service was to begin. We went in, sat down, and as the choir was singing I was thinking to myself, "What a relief it is to get here." Secondly, I thought of Isaiah 6:1, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple." I wondered what Isaiah had been through, what he had felt, and what he had experienced as he came to that worship moment. I thought how wonderful it must have been to experience the joy of seeing the Lord.

As we worshipped on that Sunday morning, I felt that joy of setting aside time for worship and meeting with the Lord. Out of all the hustle and bustle, pulling and pushing, tugging and complaining, it is worth the time, effort, energy, and determination to come together and worship. If something is keeping you away, get past it, over it, under it, or around it, and look for the Lord. You will see Him, and you will be glad you did.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

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REVIVALS

1. O'Zion Church, Meadville: Revival, Sept. 17-19; Fri-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.; followed by fellowship meal; Randall Griffin, speaker; Glenn Bird, pastor.
2. Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg: Revival, Sept. 19-22; Sun., 10 a.m., followed by covered dish, and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon with light lunch served, and 7 p.m.; Step Martin, speaker; Price Harris, music.
3. Ethel Church, Ethel: Revival, Sept. 19-23. Sun. School, 10 a.m.; morning worship, 11 a.m.; evening service, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Doug White, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music.
4. Zion Hill Church, Wesson: Revival, Sept. 19-23; Sun., 10:45 a.m. and 6:45 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Ray Cummings, speaker; Jewel Greer, music; Tom McCormick, pastor.
5. Navilla Church, McComb: Revival, Sept. 26-29; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Michael Grenn, speaker; Tim Morrison, music; Larry Romack, pastor.
6. Trinity Church, Laurel: Revival, Sept. 26-29; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Walton Douglas, speaker; Keith Yelverton, pastor.
7. Fellowship Church, Ellisville: Revival, Sept. 26-29; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Koby Easterling, spaker; Jason Walley, music.
8. LeMoyne Blvd. Church, Biloxi: Revival, Oct. 3-6; Sun., 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6 p.m.
9. Crestview Church, Petal: Revival, Oct. 3-7; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Speakers: Tracey Hipps, Rory Dill, James Edmonds, Jack Davis, Paul Roney, and Raymond Parkin, speakers; Stevie Dewease and Answered Prayer, music, Sun.-Wed; Michael Thornton, music, Thurs.
10. Mt. Carmel Church, Neshoba Assn.: Revival, Sept. 19 - 22; Sun., 6:00 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Chris Vowell, speaker; Larron Johnson, music; Mack Alford, pastor.

ANNIVERSARIES

1. First Church, Brandon: 175th Anniversary; Sept. 25-26; Sat., worship celebration beginning at 5:30 p.m. on South College Street campus; followed by fellowship meal (tickets available at South College Street campus); Sun. services at 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m., and 11 a.m.
2. County Line Church, Union: 150th Anniversary; Sept. 26; 10 a.m.; followed by lunch; David Jay, pastor.
3. Bethel Church, Brandon: 100th Anniversary, Oct. 17; 10 a.m.; followed by dinner on the grounds. Past preachers will be featured speakers.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

10. **Egypt Church, Chickasaw Assoc.**, youth conducted a mission trip on June 6-11 as part of TeamEffort to the Sea Mark Orphanage in Jacksonville, Fl. Pictured are participants.
11. **Pine Grove Church, Magee**, will host an It's All About Jesus preaching conference on Oct. 3-6. Sun. services will be at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. with Mack Harrison, speaker. Mon.-Wed. services, 7 p.m. Monday, Dan Lanier, speaker. Tues., Johnny Sykes, speaker. Wes., Chad Grayson, speaker.
12. **Ebenezer Church, Lexington**, will host The Revelations Quartet and Tim Frith and the Gospel Echoes in concert at 4 p.m. on September 25, at the Central Holmes Christian School auditorium in Lexington. Local musicians will also perform. There is no admission but donations will be accepted.
13. **College Hill Church, Calhoun Assoc.**, will honor Pastor Jimmy Vance upon his 50th anniversary of service in the Gospel ministry, from 2-4 p.m. on September 26 at the Methodist Corner on the Calhoun City Square. All friends are invited.
14. **Grandview Church, Pearl**, will celebrate the 30th anniversary of Pastor Wade Chappell on October 3. Worship service will begin at 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds. All friends are invited.
15. **Daniel Memorial Church, Jackson**, will celebrate 75 years of ministry on October 3.



10. Egypt Church, Chickasaw Assoc.

Atheist doctors more likely to euthanize patients, British survey shows

WASHINGTON (BP) — A survey of British physicians shows those who are atheistic or agnostic are nearly two times as likely as religious doctors to make decisions that will hasten the deaths of their terminally ill patients.

The poll of more than 3,700 English doctors showed those who considered themselves as "extremely" or "very nonreligious" were almost twice as likely to have taken actions such as continuous deep sedation, which can speed up a patient's demise, according to the Associated Press.

Clive Seale, a professor at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry who conducted the survey, said "non-religious doctors should confess their predilections to their patients" to make certain physicians are making decisions in line with those patients' desires, the story said.

The British Medical Association's guidelines say doctors are not to permit their religious beliefs to interfere with their care of patients, according to AP. Britain's National Council for Palliative Care underwrote the survey.

Meanwhile, more than 70 % of the residents of Quebec support the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide, according to a recent survey.

The Montreal Gazette reported Aug. 22 that 71% of respondents said "yes" to the following question: "Do you believe decriminalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide is the right way to help people die with dignity?" Only 16% said "no," and 13% said they were undecided. The poll was conducted for the newspaper.

Americans are far more opposed to doctor assisted suicide. A 2009 Gallup survey showed that 56% of adults called doctor assisted suicide "morally wrong" while 39% called it

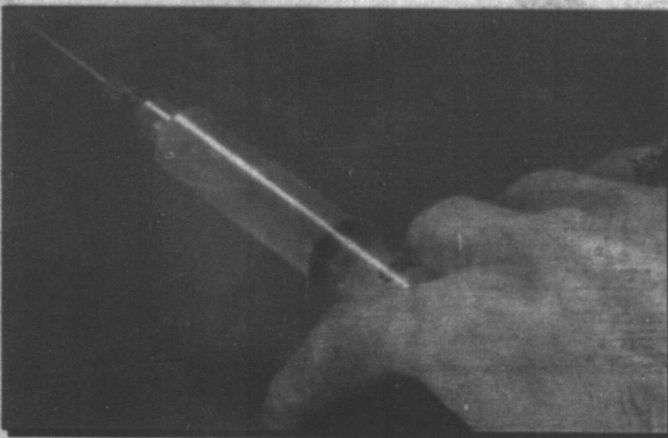
"morally acceptable." Previous Gallup polls had it closer to a 50-50 split.

Canadian law forbids euthanasia and assisted suicide, but a Quebec provincial committee will solicit public comment in September on the legalization of both, according to The Gazette.

Linda Couture, director of Living With Dignity, said people may support euthanasia because they fail to recognize there is a distinction between avoiding pain and seeking death.

"The perception of people who are underperforming in society — who are considered a burden to society because hospital beds are full — it seems that we want to get rid of people easily by giving up on them when they need us the most," Couture said, according to The Gazette. "This is a symptom that the system is giving up on its elderly. This is the ultimate abuse."

In euthanasia, a physician administers a lethal dose of drugs that takes a patient's life. In assisted suicide, a doctor does not administer a fatal dose but prescribes drugs for a patient to use in taking his own life.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



1. Slayden Church, Slayden

1. **Slayden Church, Slayden**, hosted Vacation Bible School on June 21-25, with 245 enrolled. There were four professions of faith and six rededications. Offering on \$809.40 was distributed to two local families in need.

2. **Hope Church, New Harmony Church, and New Bethel Church in Neshoba Assoc.** combined to host a Tri-Community Vacation bible School, with 16 children accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Pictured are some of the children who made profession of faith.

3. **Silver Creek church, McComb**, recently held Vacation Bible School. Pictured are preschool participants and grades one through six participants.



3a. Silver Creek church, McComb



2. Hope Church, New Harmony Church, and New Bethel Church in Neshoba Assoc.

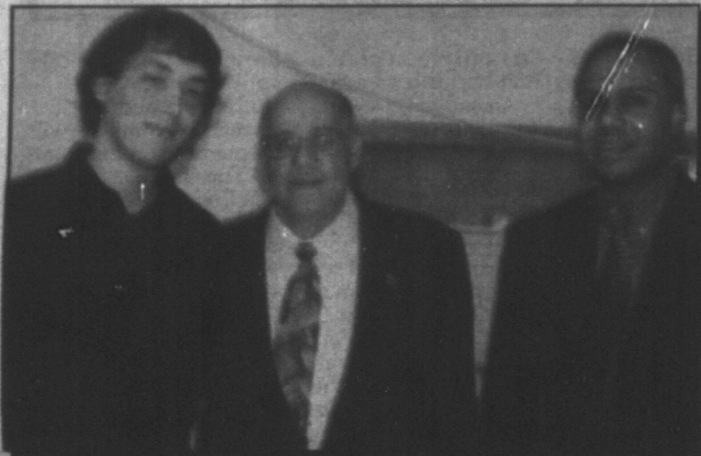


3b. Silver Creek church, McComb

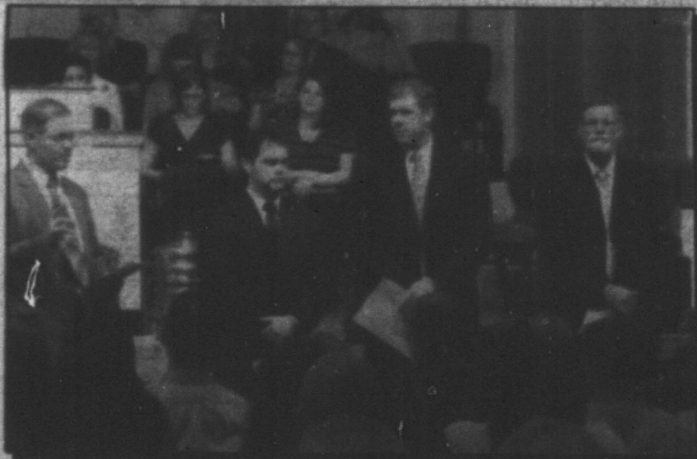
JUST FOR THE RECORD



2. West Ripley Church, Ripley



3. Daniel Memorial Church, Jackson



4. Poplar Springs Church, Meridian



5. First Church, Plantersville

1. Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, will host a community singing at 6 p.m. on September 18. Featured musicians are Call to Worship.

2. West Ripley Church, Ripley, hosted a commissioning service on August 22 for Jimmy and Earlene Walker (seated) after their appointment to the Mission Service Corps of the North American Mission Board. They are pictured with their children and grandchildren.

3. Daniel Memorial Church, Jackson, ordained Nathan Tullos to the Gospel ministry. Tullos serves as student pastor at the church.

4. Poplar Springs Church, Meridian, ordained deacons on Aug. 29. Pictured from left are Pastor John Temple, Scott White, Justin McDonald, and Robert Coulter.

5. First Church, Plantersville, recently held Golden Family day to honor couples in the church married 50 or more years. Pictured are the couples.

6. Antioch Church, Union, ordained Joel Embrey to the Gospel ministry on August 29. Pictured from left are Joel and Kim Embrey, their children Cody and Harleigh, and Pastor Ray Spence, and Amanda Spence.

7. Antioch Church, Union, children attended M4 Children's Camp at Twin Lake in July. Pictured are participants.

8. First Church, Philadelphia, GAs and Mission Friends celebrated Christmas in August by brining items for missionaries to distribute during the Christmas season. Pictured are participants.

9. Slayden Church, Slayden, dedicated a new Gazebo on Aug. 29 in memory of Louise Winter Hurdle, a faithful member of the church for 71 years.



6. Antioch Church, Union



7. Antioch Church, Union



8. First Church, Philadelphia



9. Slayden Church, Slayden

**First Baptist Church
of Fannin**
FALL REVIVAL
SUNDAY 26th
8:30 & 10:45 AM & 6 PM
Sept. 27, 28 & 29th @ 7 PM
Featuring
DR. HAROLD BRISON

Christians' Responsibility to the Needy

By Dwayne Hastings
The Ethics and Religious Liberty Comm.

While there is a general expectation among many people that government is responsible for addressing the problems of poverty and hunger, Scripture indicates otherwise.

For those radically transformed by the love of Christ, there is an obligation to care for those who are in need. When the Apostle Paul and Barnabas were sent out to preach to the Gentiles, they were encouraged "only that we would remember the poor, which I made every effort to do" (Gal. 2:9-10).

It is a fact that the vast majority of efforts to aid the hungry are faith based—nearly 74 percent of the food pantries, over 64 percent of the kitchens, and 43 percent of the shelters, according to a 2006 study conducted for America's Second Harvest. Over 68 percent of agencies operating emergency feeding programs are affiliated with religious institutions.

Southern Baptist disaster relief work has developed over the years into a well-oiled machine that coordinates the efforts of trained volunteers from the United States and Canada. In

2005, those efforts included the preparation of 17,124,738 meals, 14.5 million of which were in response to the hurricanes that devastated parts of Florida and the Gulf Coast. In 2009, Southern Baptists gave over \$5 million to the World Hunger Fund.

Human needs and suffering are most visible during a major natural disaster, but there are families facing malnourishment and starvation every day of the year in the U.S. These stories of despair don't make our morning newspapers' headlines. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported in 2004 that 11.9 percent of all U.S. households were "food insecure." In other words, there were times they didn't know where their next meal was coming from.

Since 1999, food insecurity has increased by 3 million households, including 1.4 million households with children. In 2004, 38.2 million people lived in households experiencing food insecurity, compared to 33.6 million in 2001 and 31 million in 1999.

Across the country, missionaries and others are ministering to many of these hungry people through the gifts given to the World Hunger Fund.

In Gainesville, Georgia, Good Samaritan Ministries serves over five thousand families a year, according to ministry coordinator Mike Walston. This ministry relies on hunger funds generously provided by Southern Baptists to provide families in need with non-perishable food. He said those served include the elderly on fixed incomes and shut-ins who would be in desperate straits without the ministry.

Volunteers are the heart of the ministry, Walston related, noting the seventy churches in the association all participate. "All they get in return is the satisfaction of knowing they are doing God's will," he added.

Every person who is given a box of food gets to hear the Good News of the Gospel, Walston said. "We share Christ with everyone who comes in," he explained. "We don't force it on them; we just want to know where they are in their walk with the Lord. There is no pressure put on them at all." Walston said every year an average of seventy-five people accept the Lord at the center, which is staffed by volunteers from churches in the Chattahoochee Baptist Association.

SBC World Hunger Fund monies are used domestically by the North American Mission Board and abroad by the International Mission Board. You can be a part of these vital ministries by making a contribution to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund.

Unless otherwise designated, twenty cents of every dollar is sent to the North American Mission Board to support hunger projects in the United States and Canada. Eighty cents of every dollar is sent to the International Mission Board for hunger and relief projects including food distribution, job skills training, water well drilling, education in agricultural techniques and nutrition, livestock, and water purification.

Because personnel and volunteers are already in place and promotional expenses come through other budgets, 100 percent of your gifts is used to minister to the hungry in Jesus' name. You can minister to those who hunger by designating your offering for the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund.

For more information, contact the CAC at 601-292-3329 or e-mail at cacinfo@christianaction.com

Missionary journeys from country to country with Good News

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Hugo, an ex-convict, was an alcoholic with a red-hot temper. He fit right in with the other residents along Chile's Quatro Sud (Four South), a road populated by prostitutes, transvestites, alcoholics, and drug addicts.

It was this road, which runs through one of the roughest neighborhoods in Talca, Chile, that God used as a catalyst to transform Hugo's life.

Chris Burgess, a Comanche native from Lawton, Okla., had served in another South American country, Peru, in 2009 as a short-term student missionary with the International Mission Board (IMB), making his overseas trip as part of Fusion — a full-time, two-semester missions course that couples classroom teaching with real-world overseas missions experience.

God called him back to Peru this past spring, leading Native American students on a Fusion team. But when an 8.8-magnitude earthquake slammed Chile in February, Burgess and a teammate were deployed to Chile to help distribute relief supplies. That's how Burgess met Hugo.

Hugo lost his home in the earthquake and was living in temporary housing, with five other alcoholics on Four South. Through a connection made by an IMB missionary serving in

Chile, Burgess was given the opportunity to share his testimony with the men.

Speaking through a translator, he told them how God's love transcended his anger over his mother's death and an abusive relationship with his father — also an alcoholic. The story struck a chord with Hugo.

"Hugo just started crying and fell on his knees and was saying, 'I want to change ... save me,'" Burgess remembers. That day, Hugo surrendered his life to Jesus.

Burgess and his Fusion teammate quickly began making inroads with other communities along Four South. An offer to teach English opened the door to start a Bible study with a group of transvestites a few blocks from where Hugo lived. Eventually the Fusion team was leading six Bible studies in four locations along Four South, five nights a week.

"We had connections. We fellowshiped with them. We prayed. And it was just so amazing because God made like a little spark and then BAM — it lit up the whole street," Burgess says.

The most amazing thing, he adds, was the transformation he saw in Hugo — the evidence of which nearly cost Hugo his life.

A few weeks after his conver-

sion Hugo got into an argument and was attacked by someone he thought was his friend. The friend was drunk and stabbed Hugo seven times in the chest and stomach. Hugo was rushed to the hospital; doctors discovered that miraculously the man's knife had missed vital organs.

"It was the enemy [Satan]," Burgess says of the attack. "Here's this guy, he was without hope but now he's on fire for God, reads his Bible [frequently], and he gets stabbed!"

Hospital rules prevented Burgess from visiting his friend until he was discharged. When the two were finally able to meet, Hugo's story blew Burgess away. Even while being stabbed, Hugo didn't fight back.

"Hugo had an anger problem, so you would assume that he would do something. But he said at that time the Spirit of God spoke to him and told him to put down his fists and just be at peace, so he didn't react in any way. He just took it," Burgess says.

"I almost cried when he was telling me this because you could just see he wasn't mad about it at all — you could see the change in his face. He's smiling and telling the story and talks about how he wants to go back to the guy who stabbed him and talk to him about it."



SHARING GOSPEL — Student missionary Chris Burgess (right) tells Elvis, a Quechua friend in Peru, he doesn't need a priest to forgive his sins — he can speak to God himself and have a personal relationship with Jesus. (BP photo)

What's more, Hugo says he wants to move back to his hometown in Chile and begin telling others what Christ has done for him. "I actually believe he's going to follow through with it," Burgess says. "His whole character has been changed by God... it's just amazing."

Burgess says he also feels God's call to continue sharing the Gospel and is considering full-time international mission work, particularly among Latin

American cultures, after he completes his undergraduate degree from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

"I've seen and felt the presence of God through the work we did to heal the broken," Burgess says. "[He] has really used this experience. I love it. I love how it has changed me."

See how Chris Burgess' service in Peru began at missionstories.com/burgess.

January Bible Study previewed at Ridgecrest meeting

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—At East End Church, January Bible Study (JBS) is a big event. "I get more people who start off the year in January Bible Study than any other time," said Mark Croston, senior pastor of the Suffolk, Va., congregation. "I guess they just want to start the year off right."

Croston taught The Truth About Grace, the 2011 JBS based on the New Testament's Book of Galatians, during Black Church Leadership and Family Conference at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina.

Since the former Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources) inaugurated JBS in 1948, participating churches have spent eight hours of time in in-depth study of God's Word, focusing on the same book of the Bible or portions of a Bible book. Each year, the first full week of January is set aside on the Southern Baptist denominational calendar for JBS; however, many churches move this to a time more suited to their needs.

Croston, in his JBS session during the gathering of black church leaders in mid-July, defined grace as God's design for reconciling humanity to Himself through Jesus Christ.

"Galatians defends the grace of God," the pastor said. "The fact is that God couldn't love you any more and God couldn't love you any less. It's about His grace, not your work."

Croston added that everyone — Christian and non-Christian — benefits from the grace of God.

"If you're saved, you've experienced God's grace," he said. "If you're not saved, you've experienced God's grace. How? You're up walking around and your blood is flowing."

Croston reviewed the setting of the Book of Galatians: It was written in the first century by the Apostle Paul; the recipients were believers in the churches located in the province of Galatia; the occasion for the letter was the emergence of false teaching in the Galatian churches; and the central message is that salvation comes by God's grace, not through human effort.

The church at Galatia was a hotbed of legalism, Croston noted. Addressing the characteristics of legalism, he said it threat-

ens the truth of the Gospel, is susceptible to promoting hypocrisy, results in joyless religious faith, demonstrates misguided enthusiasm, is highly contagious within a church, and results in tumultuous relationships.

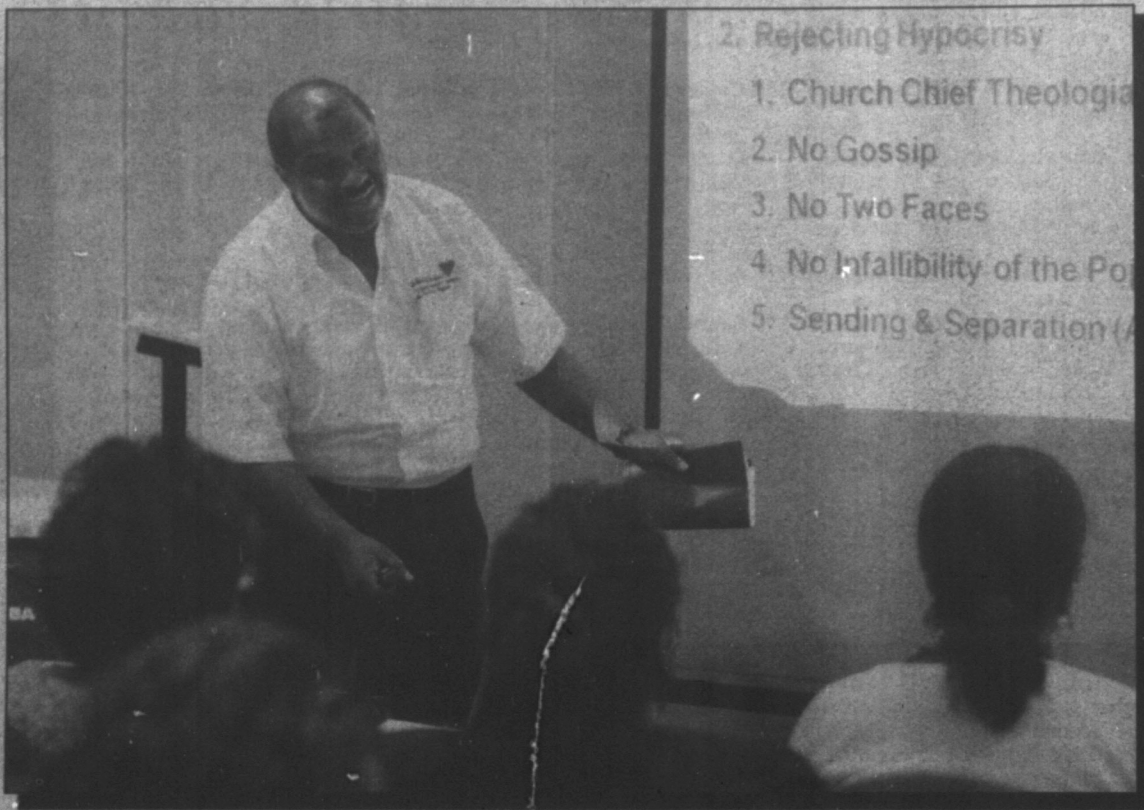
"There is also slavery in legalism that leads to bondage," Croston said.

"Whenever you think about living up to the expectations of others, that's bondage. Craving the approval of others is bondage. Trying to maintain the façade of reputation is bondage. Striving to keep God's commands through human strength is bondage."

"All churches have their own 'rules' about what is right and wrong," Croston said, adding that many of these "rules" have nothing to do with Scripture. "Your church probably has a 'rule' about what to wear, where to sit, what food to bring to the potluck," the pastor said. "Those aren't in Scripture, so we shouldn't worry about it."

"My wife passed in 2008 from cancer," he said. "I never knew there were so many rules for widows and widowers. Rules about how long you can mope along, when you can go out on a date, how many times you can cry in the pulpit! Rules! Not Scripture! Rules!"

Grace is separate from the law, Croston said, explaining, "The real purpose of the law was to show us that we never will be able to measure up. Through the law we see our need for grace. We can't lose our salvation because it was never up to us anyway," Croston said.



READY FOR JANUARY — Mark Croston, pastor of East End Baptist Church in Suffolk, Va., talks with attendees at the Black Church Leadership and Family Conference during his presentation of the upcoming January Bible Study focus on Galatians. (BP photo)

2. Rejecting Hypocrisy
1. Church Chief Theologian
2. No Gossip
3. No Two Faces
4. No Infallibility of the Pope
5. Sending & Separation (A)

"God bound Himself to us. I'm saved and continue to be saved, not because I'm so good, but because God will not let me go," the pastor said. "I am bound to Him. I am saved and secured by grace!"

Looking around the room of about 60 people, Croston said, "We look different. We act different. But what unites us — the belief in our salvation from the Lord Jesus Christ — is much stronger than anything that divides us."

Croston said that unlike the church in Galatia, circumcision isn't the dividing issue in

today's churches. But, he added, all churches have their issues. "What is it in your church that is legalistic?" he asked. "We have to let go of the things that aren't essential."

"In Galatians, Paul reminded the church that the trouble with trusting in the law for salvation is that all the law must be kept," Croston said. "All of it. Offending the law in one place offends all of the law."

"He [Paul] said what matters is that you have faith working through love," Croston said. "You have to keep looking at your love barometer. Are you

preaching with love? Are you ushering with love? Are you teaching, singing and sharing with love?"

"Just as Paul challenged the false teachers in Galatia, Christians have a responsibility to challenge false teachers today," Croston said. "You have to be in the Book [the Bible] too," he said, "You have to know the Book so you will be able to recognize false teaching. You also have to know the Book so you can judge yourself. The Bible is like a mirror. You see what you look like in contrast to the Bible."

HOMECOMINGS

1. **Elon Church, Macon:** Homecoming, Sept. 19; morning worship, 11 a.m.; followed by lunch; Sterling Davis, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music.
2. **New Providence, Leake Assoc.:** Homecoming, Sept. 19; 10 a.m. Dax Summerhill, speaker; Janice W. King and Pam W. Harris, music; Smith Sanders, pastor.
3. **New Providence Church, Hazlehurst:** 182nd Homecoming; Sept. 19; Sun. School 10 a.m.; morning worship, 11 a.m.; followed by covered dish luncheon; Brad Moak, speaker.
4. **Hebron Church, Panola Assoc.:** Homecoming, Sept. 26; 10:30 a.m.; covered dish at noon followed by Steve Gregory Singers in afternoon. Donnie Stewart, speaker; Terry Tribble, pastor.
5. **First Church, Columbus:** Homecoming, Sept. 26; worship, 10 a.m.; followed by covered dish luncheon. Shawn Parker, pastor.
6. **Beulah Church, Lexington:** Homecoming, Sept. 26; 11 a.m.; Tom Kilgore, speaker; Thunder and local groups, music; Lyn Nations, pastor.
7. **Mt. Carmel Church, Klein:** Homecoming, Sept. 26; pot luck lunch following services.
8. **Friendship Church, Aberdeen:** Homecoming, Sept. 26; reception, 9:30 a.m.; worship service, 10:30 a.m.; followed by covered dish; Hubert Green, speaker; Cayce Wilson, music. Mark Thornton, pastor.
9. **West Heights Church, Pontotoc:** Homecoming, Sept. 26; 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.; noon, pot luck meal; afternoon singing, 1 p.m. James Spencer, Speaker, David Hamilton, pastor.
10. **Ebenezer Church, Lexington:** Homecoming, Sept. 26; 11 a.m. at Ebenezer Methodist Church; followed by pot luck lunch. Dale Holloway, speaker; Alisa Drake, music; Billy Barron, pastor.

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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

The Case for God's Love

Focal Passages: Job 40:1-9; Romans 8:18-21, 28-30

By Rick Henson

Why is there suffering in the world, and why would a loving God allow suffering? The world asks "Why?" when God wants to show you "How?" The *why* of suffering is beyond us, though *how* we should respond is within our abilities. Your *why* may never be answered this side of eternity, and it probably will not matter on the other side of eternity. How you respond to that suffering though, reveals who you are, demonstrates your trust in God, and strengthens your witness to unbelievers.

In the 1980's I stood outside an ICU with a man and his wife, surrounded by friends and family. The father haltingly spoke through tears sharing how his daughter had survived the automobile accident, though she was brain dead. They made the difficult deci-

sion to donate her useable organs and remove her life support. He then witnessed to all there about how they would see their daughter again because of Jesus. I was amazed as this Methodist laymen shared that because God gave up His son, he could give up his daughter. He advised all there to meet Jesus so their lives would be worth living now and worth dying one day. That was the most powerful witness I ever heard. Their suffering deepened and strengthened their words and revealed the depth of their faith.

The Scriptures give four reasons for suffering in all people: 1. Life is filled with obstacles. Jesus said in Matthew 5:45 "He causes the sun to shine on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," (KJV); 2. We cause our own problems, since per-



Henson

sonal choices have consequences. For example, one may obligate himself to too much debt then blame God that he hasn't enough money; 3. Other people's actions, intentional or not, may cause suffering (Matthew 18:15); and

4. People may be attacked by Satan. Jesus said in Luke 13:16, "Satan has bound this woman, a daughter of Abraham, for 18 years—shouldn't she be untied from this bondage on the Sabbath day?"

The Bible reveals three additional reasons for suffering in a believer's life: 1. God often tests His children (Job 1 and 1 Peter 4:19); 2. God often prunes His children to bare more fruit (John 15:2); and 3. God often disciplines His children (Hebrews 12:6-10).

Notice the source of suffering in the world is usually human and not divine, yet many blame God for allowing suffering, when humans choose sin against God instead of serv-

ing Him. Even those who question God's allowing suffering, have caused suffering in others. We disobey God, causing pain and suffering, and then we use the fact that suffering exists to justify our not obeying God.

God promises for His followers that even sufferings may be a blessing. Romans 8:28 reads, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," (KJV). As Joseph said to his brother in Genesis 50:20 about their selling him into slavery, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass... to save much people alive," (KJV).

Once when I was preaching, I asked if a shot a child receives at the doctor's office is good or bad. A child immediately yelled out from the congregation, "It's bad!" Everyone laughed, but that proved my point. From a child's vantage, an inoculation is terrible. From the doctor's and parent's vantage, it is potentially lifesaving.

From a child of God's viewpoint, suffering is terrible and useless, though from God's viewpoint, it is potentially soul-saving. Rick Warren wrote in *The Purpose Driven Life*, "God is more interested in our character than our comfort."

In light of eternity, nothing in this world will diminish the beauty of heaven, nor tarnish the loveliness of being with Jesus forever. Romans 8:18-21 reads, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," (KJV).

I recently saw a poem by Robert Browning (1812-1889) written on a hand-made sign at Waveland MS in a community still suffering the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina: "I walked a mile with pleasure; she chatted all the way; but left me none the wiser for all she had to say. I walked a mile with sorrow, ne'er a word said she; but, oh! The things I learned from her, when sorrow walked with me."

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

God's Power Changes People

Ephesians 2: 1-10

By Melleen Moore

The difference between needs and wants is an age old discussion. It is continuously changing—needs may be basic but wants indicated that we are never fully satisfied. Having just read an article in Prayer Points, a publication of Samaritans Purse, I was intrigued by the testimony of a 17 year old from Trinidad. She wanted the shoe box gift but did not know she needed Jesus Christ who was introduced in the gift. She had never heard of him. There is encouragement in Ephesians chapter 2 that addresses our need for Jesus. Depending on the Biblical translation, the headings may sound different but shows hope in Christ—From Death to Life (HCSB), Made Alive in Christ (NLT) and By Grace

Through Faith (NKJV) are a few that focus on life in Christ.

The Depth of our Sin
Ephesians 2:1-3

Paul writes plainly of being dead in sin. The need for Jesus Christ is evidenced as Paul describes those in sin as dead, separated from God. Dead by the sheer nature—as man is born in sin. The inner man of the unsaved has no desire for Christ. He is spiritually dead, in a world dominated by Satan, "the ruler of the atmospheric domain." (Eph 2:2, HCSB). His domain is a disobedient society that ignores Jesus Christ. Three negative forces or influences that cause man to sin are identified as the world, the devil and the spirit of the flesh. Having previously conducted ourselves in the



Moore

flesh and fulfilling selfish desires, man became children of wrath. The past tense of "previously" indicates the believer has recognized the need for Jesus Christ.

Believing the lies of Satan cause man to be vulnerable to disobedience. With God's power through salvation the needs of sinful man are met and changes his inner being.

The Power of
God's Grace
Ephesians 2:4-7

God's grace is welcome especially after that painful realization of what Paul describes as being dead in sin. God's abundant mercy and great love is all that is needed to make us "alive with the Messiah" (Eph 2:5, HCSB). The words of an old familiar hymn ring loud and clear—amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me". Grace is the gift that res-

cues sinful man just by man's acceptance, belief and confession through faith which grants the covering of the Holy Spirit. The power of God through faith changes the inner man raising us up to heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We need Jesus and He wants to show "the immeasurable riches of His grace...to us in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2: 7, HCSB). Simply put, the power of God's gift through His love (verse 4), His grace (verse 5), His fellowship (verse 6) and His immeasurable riches (verse 7) (HCSB) lead believers to experience salvation in Christ.

The Place of our Works
Eph. 2:8-10

Recognizing that the experience of salvation is God's gift, the believer responds with love in action. We cannot work to earn salvation; it is a gift. We, as believers, have received the gift and it continues to be ours. The price for salvation was paid once and for all. (We rejoice in salvation by giving God glory for our

abilities.) Being created by God in His image, the example is set before us in the pages of His Word—to do good. We produce fruits as a result of salvation not to earn salvation. In James 2:26, we read "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (NKJV). The desire to do good works is born into the heart of man from a heart that is right with God. Salvation comes through the shed blood of Jesus on the cross, according to God's plan. We can not add anything and must not take anything away. Paul reminds us that boasting of salvation is not of ourselves as it is not of works but a gift of God. The Holy Spirit that lives in the heart of the believer is the guide that produces good works. God's power changes people giving them a desire to meet the needs of a lost world by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Moore is a member of Macedonia Church, Petal.

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Congress to tackle top issues in upcoming session

WASHINGTON (BP) — Members of Congress will begin returning to business Sept. 13 with the volatile issue of homosexuals in the military awaiting more action. When they resume business, the Senate or House, or both, will have the opportunity to advance not only the lifting of a ban on homosexuals in the armed services but other proposals opposed by pro-life and pro-family advocates.

Such measures that could receive votes this fall include the authorization of federal funds for stem cell research that destroys embryos; elimination of a restriction on elective, privately funded abortions in military health-care facilities; solidifying repeal of a ban on government grants for organizations that perform or promote abortions overseas, and legalizing Internet gambling.

Though the House already has approved legislation overturning the ban on open homosexuals serving in the armed forces, it appears unlikely the Senate will address such a political "hot potato" only weeks before the Nov. 2 election. The Democrat leadership could postpone a vote to overturn the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law until an expected "lame-duck" session is held in November and December. Waiting until a "lame-duck" session would enable vulnerable senators to escape a politically costly vote before the election while preempting the swearing in of what will likely be a more conservative Congress in January.

Other proposals the leadership in Congress may choose to promote only in a "lame-duck" session include reforming the immigration system, levying a national tax as part of a downsized energy bill and revising campaign financing in a way pro-family groups say would restrict their freedom of speech.

Members of Congress "will be under tremendous pressure to pass liberal bills while the opportunity exists," said Barrett Duke, vice president for public policy with the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "While it is likely that many vulnerable congressmen and senators will be very nervous about taking any controversial votes prior to the November elections, the pressure to deliver for liberal constituencies will be immense," Duke told Baptist Press. "It is crucial

that these men and women hear from Bible-believing values voters between now and the end of the year to help them make the right decisions."

The House approved repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in late May, when representatives voted 234-194 for such an amendment to the annual Department of Defense authorization bill. Members later passed the overall legislation in a 229-186 roll call.

On the same day the House approved its amendment, the Senate Armed Services Committee sent its version to the full chamber in a 16-12 vote.

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell," which was enacted in 1993, prevents homosexuals from serving openly but also prohibits military commanders from asking service members if they are homosexual or about their sexual orientation.

Supporters of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" oppose repeal because they say it will undermine military readiness, cohesion, privacy, recruitment, and retention, as well as the religious freedom of many service members and chaplains whose opposition to homosexual behavior is based on the Bible.

President Obama promised during the 2008 election campaign to overturn the ban. During his State of the Union speech in January, the president said he would work for repeal this year.

The House and Senate actions in May came only three days after the White House and congressional leaders reached an agreement on a way to pass repeal of the ban. Under the agreement and subsequent legislation, repeal would not go into effect until the Pentagon has finished a study of the issue Dec. 1. The agreement requires that President Obama, Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Michael Mullen sign off on repeal of the policy. All three are on record in support of repeal.

Gates implemented a comprehensive review of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in March. As part of the study, the Pentagon is eliciting feedback from military personnel and their families. Gates said in April he believes "in the strongest possible terms" that the review should be complete prior to any legislative action. Mullen and the chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines also said

Congress should not act until the review of the current policy has been completed.

A link to an online questionnaire was e-mailed in July to 400,000 military personnel, and another survey was to go to 150,000 family members in August, according to the Department of Defense.

In other legislative efforts:

- The attempt to restore federal funding for embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) may receive a vote in the House before the election. Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo., said she expects the chamber to pass her bill in September, Politico reported Sept. 3.

DeGette's proposal, the Stem Cell Research Advancement Act, H.R. 4808, would also authorize funding of human cloning, as long as the clone is not implanted in a womb.

DeGette's push for passage follows an Aug. 23 decision suspending funding of ESCR. Federal judge Royce Lamberth of the District of Columbia issued a preliminary injunction blocking the continued application of last year's federal guidelines governing grants for research on stem cells taken from human embryos. An appeals court Sept. 9 stayed the injunction.

Obama overturned by executive order in March 2009 a prohibition instituted by President Bush on federal funding of ESCR in 2001. Lamberth found the guidelines subsequently published in July 2009 by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) violated a 1996 law that prohibits federal funds for research in which a human embryo is destroyed.

The ability of stem cells to convert to other cells and tissues has provided great hope for developing cures for various diseases, but extracting stem cells from an embryo results in

the destruction of the days-old human being. Only research with adult stem cells in which their extraction does not harm donors has provided successful treatments in human trials.

- Another amendment to the Senate's National Defense Authorization Act would strike down a longstanding prohibition on abortions in military facilities. The amendment, sponsored by Democratic Sen. Roland Burris of Illinois, would eliminate a restriction on elective, privately funded abortions in military health care facilities that has been in place for the last 14 years. Burris' proposal would not affect the ban that exists on publicly funded abortions at armed services hospitals.

The Senate Armed Services Committee passed the Burris amendment in a 15-12 vote. The defense authorization bill approved in the House of Representatives does not include the repeal of the ban. If the bill eventually passed by the Senate includes the provision, its fate in the final version would be negotiated in a conference committee of members of both houses.

- The Senate will consider a spending bill that includes a measure that would strengthen repeal of a ban on federal funds for organizations that perform or promote abortions overseas.

The Appropriations Committee approved an amendment by Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., July 29 that would codify President Obama's 2009 reversal of the Mexico City Policy. The provision was added to the State and Foreign Operations spending bill.

If the amended bill is passed and signed by President Obama, a future pro-life president would not be able to reinstate the Mexico City Policy

with an executive order. It would require congressional action — a much taller hurdle.

The policy, which was in effect from 1984 to 1993 and 2001 to 2009, prohibited international family planning organizations from receiving federal funds unless they agreed not to perform or counsel for abortion or lobby in order to liberalize the pro-life policies of foreign governments.

- A House committee has forwarded to the full chamber a bill that would have the effect of rescinding the four-year-old Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act. That law largely bars online gambling in the United States by requiring financial institutions to block credit card and other payments to Internet wagering businesses. Long-delayed regulations enforcing the law went into effect June 1.

In late July, the House Financial Services Committee voted 41-22 for the Internet Gambling Regulation, Consumer Protection and Enforcement Act, H.R. 2267. The proposal, sponsored by Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., would both legalize such wagering and authorize the federal government to regulate it.

A related measure — the Internet Gambling Regulation and Tax Enforcement Act, H.R. 4976 — would provide for taxation of gambling revenues in conjunction with Frank's legislation. The House Ways and Means Committee is expected to consider it in September, according to the ERLC. Rep. Jim McDermott, D-Wash., is the bill's sponsor.

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'Thankful Thursday' draws people from across world

CLARKSTON, Ga. (BP) — The early morning rain has passed and it's 9 a.m. on another "Thankful Thursday" as dozens of refugees — in pairs, as families or in groups — stroll up to Clarkston International Bible Church (CIBC).

Their smiling faces and the bright colors of their native dress belie the personal hardships many overcame for a new start in America. In some cases, they have escaped war, famine, disease, religious persecution, and death in countries like Iraq, Sudan, Burma, Somalia, Liberia, Cambodia, Thailand, and two dozen others.

They are Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Coptic Christians, and atheists. Today, they're coming to learn English at Clarkston International Bible Church.

While Thankful Thursday is a weekly outreach at the multi-ethnic church near Atlanta, this particular Thursday also is Spiritual Focus Day for some 230 staff members of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) who — for the second straight year — left their Alpharetta, Ga., offices to minister and share the Gospel with immigrants in Clarkston.

Clarkston, a town of about 7,200 about 18 miles east of downtown Atlanta, has been a designated refugee resettlement site for thousands of legal immigrants pouring into the United States over the years.

For five years now, Phil Kitchin has pastored CIBC, which on the outside — with its red brick and white steeple — resembles any other typical Southern Baptist church,

across the South. However, it's anything but.

"CIBC is unique," Kitchin says. "On Sundays, this is like the United Nations. We have seven different language congregations. We have one English service, but with 20-30 different nationalities in attendance."

Kitchin says his right-hand man is NAMB Mission Service Corps (MSC) missionary Kevin Riley, who helps minister to Clarkston's flock of multi-ethnic immigrants and who coordinated NAMB's recent visit to Clarkston.

"Not only does the community have refugees from all over the world, the local Clarkston schools have students from at least 50 different countries," Riley said. In the church's English (as a Second Language (ESL) class on Thankful Thursdays, dozens of languages are spoken.

"When NAMB's staff comes, it sends out the clear message that Americans are truly interested in the immigrants," Riley said. "We're not here for what we can get out of them. We're not trying to manipulate them. We want to give them something unconditionally, the Gospel."

Before this year's Spiritual Focus Day was over, NAMB's street evangelism teams would comb apartment neighborhoods around the church, initiating 103 conversations with refugees, sharing the Gospel 57 times, distributing more than 100 tracts in several languages and seeing eight decisions for Jesus Christ.

A 28-year-old man, "Jerrell," was only one of the eight residents led to Christ. NAMB's interim president, Richard

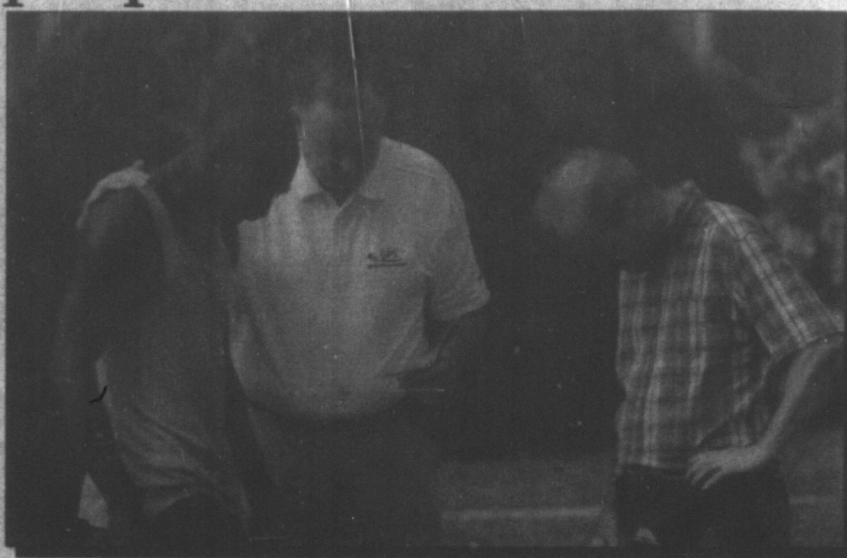
Harris, asked Jerrell if he meant it when he prayed to receive Christ. "If you did, and I think you did, your address just changed from hell to heaven," Harris said. "Isn't that good? Now you're my brother."

While street witnessing was underway, another team of NAMB staffers was on the quad at Georgia Perimeter College using "Soularium" cards as conversation starters to share the Gospel with college students.

"Soularium cards were invented by Campus Crusade for Christ," said John Ramirez, who directed the project. "There are 50 cards with pictures on them. You scatter them out and ask students to pick three which best describe their lives. In five minutes, college students will tell you the most intimate things about their lives. The cards open up people quickly, leading you to talk to them about Christ."

Ramirez said his team at the college made 50 presentations, including some to Muslims and Buddhists. A second NAMB team used the cards at nearby DeKalb Technical College.

NAMB staffers not only shared the Gospel, they also



PRAYING FOR SALVATION — Richard Harris (center), interim president of the North American Mission Board, was one of the 230 NAMB staffers who ministered in Clarkston, Ga., during its annual Spiritual Focus Day in late August. Here, Harris and NAMB's Ritche Carney (right) lead 28-year-old "Jerrell" to Christ. (BP photo)

undertook nitty-gritty physical chores as ways to minister to the refugees and make their difficult lives easier.

Donald King headed up a 12-person team who cleaned up some apartments for refugees about to move in at the Lakes and Clarkston Oaks Apartments. On this hot, muggy August day, the work was made more difficult since the previous occupants had not left the apartments in good shape.

As King vacuumed, Jill Noga and Linda Grimes scrubbed down bathrooms and Amy Signaigo washed

windows in #490 at the Lakes Apartments, the four agreed on why they had signed up for this duty: to show the love of Christ "to the least of these" because even refugees want and deserve to move into a clean apartment.

Other NAMB employees traveled to Clarkston High School and several local elementary schools to treat teachers to refreshments, take prayer requests and let them know they're appreciated.

For more information about Clarkston International Bible Church and its ministries, go to www.cibc-sbc.org.

Ok. proceeds with Ten Commandments monument despite criticism

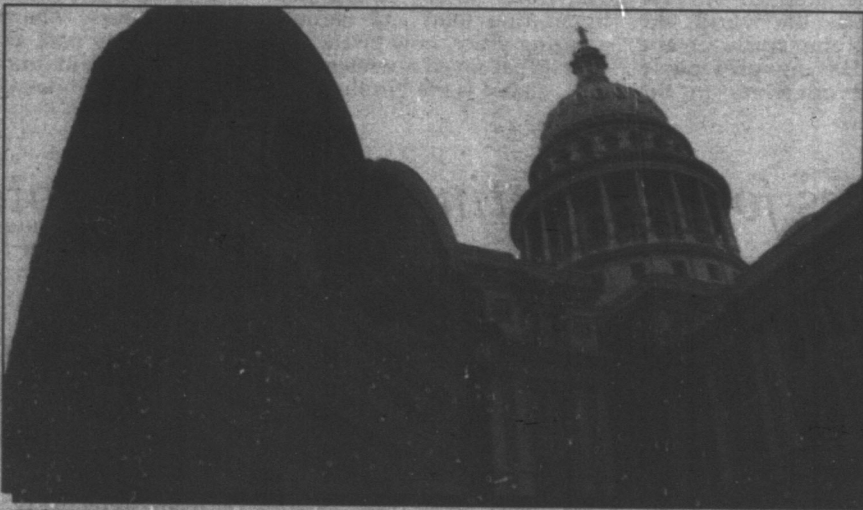
OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — Seven years after Alabama removed a Ten Commandments monument from a government building under federal court order, the state of Oklahoma is preparing to erect its own Ten Commandments monument on capitol grounds, and supporters say they have the backing of recent Supreme Court precedent.

The Oklahoma legislature easily passed and the governor signed a bill last year allowing a Ten Commandments monument to be placed on the capitol grounds. The monument will use identical language and even an identical design to one on the Texas state capitol grounds — the same one the Supreme Court upheld in its 2005 *Van Orden v. Perry* decision.

That Supreme Court ruling was handed down two years after former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore was removed from office for refusing to remove a Ten Commandments monument from the state's judicial building. Moore's monument was privately funded, as is the one in Ok. Rep. Mike Ritze, the bill's sponsor and a Southern Baptist deacon, says he and his family paid the roughly \$10,000 to construct the six-foot by three-foot monument. The granite was mined earlier this year. It's also going to cost about \$13,000 to erect it — money that is being raised using private funds.

The state legislature's bill states that the Ten Commandments are "an important component of the foundation of the laws and legal system" of the U.S. and Oklahoma and that federal and state courts "frequently cite the Ten

Commandments in published decisions." It also says "acknowledgements of the role played by the Ten Commandments in our nation's heritage are common throughout America." The bill also gives permission for the



BATTLE BREWING — At a time when some courts are ordering Ten Commandments monuments to be taken down, Oklahoma plans on erecting a monument just like this one, which resides on the Texas capitol grounds. The Supreme Court upheld the Texas monument in 2005. (BP photo)

Liberty Institute, a Texas-based Christian legal group, to defend the monument if it ends up in court. The bill passed a Republican-controlled legislature and was signed by a Democratic governor, Brad Henry. Groups such as the ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State had urged him to veto it.

"It's not going to cost the taxpayers anything to defend it," Ritze said.

Ritze, a Republican, decided to promote the bill after seeing Ten Commandments monuments on the capitol grounds of other states and learning that Oklahoma did not have one. Texas' monument was donated in 1961 by the Fraternal Order of Eagles, which donated more than 150 such monuments to public places between 1955 and 1985. The monuments were partially inspired by Cecile B. DeMille's movie, *The Ten Commandments*.

"Apparently one was donated but they never did receive it," Ritze said. "So I began drafting a bill to have one placed on the capitol grounds in our state."

The Founding Fathers likely would be amazed there is any controversy over a Ten Commandments monument, Ritze said. "Just look at government buildings all over our country," he said. "You have 'In God We Trust' on our money. You go in the Supreme Court — it's all over the Supreme Court building."